



and electrodes of the pH meter. The glass electrode is a Ag/AgCl that is enclosed by a glass membrane. It is sensitive to the presence of the internal standard HCl solution. The saturated calomel electrode is a reference electrode.

Cells

There are specialized cells called **neurons** that communicate with chemical signals generated by changes in the concentration of ions (Figure 19.13). The communication is an electrical signal generated by millisecond-long differences in ion concentration. These electrical signals travel along the neuron separating different concentrations of ions while it is at rest—that is, while no signals are being sent. These different resting ion concentrations are maintained by ion pumps that move ions across the cell membrane. The major K^+ , Cl^- , and Ca^{2+} . The intracellular concentration is much lower than the extracellular concentration.

Ion (mM)	Extracellular Concentration (mM)	Intracellular Concentration (mM)	Potential (mV)
Na^+	150	10	+60
K^+	5	150	-90
Cl^-	100	5	-70
Ca^{2+}	1.0	0.1	+120

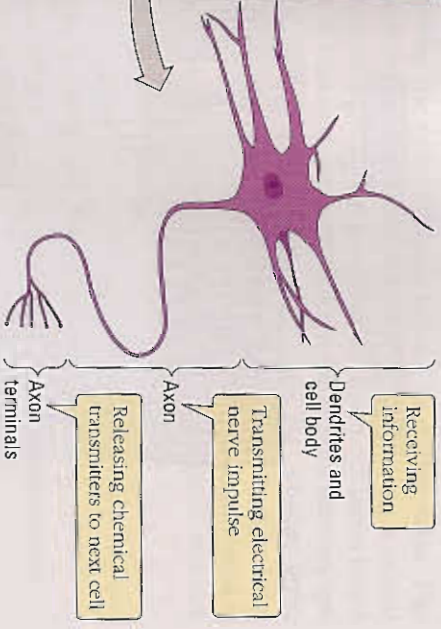


Figure 19.13 A mammalian neuron cell.

substituting numerical values for the constants, R and F , assuming $n = 1$ and a body temperature of $37^\circ C$, and converting to millivolts, we can simplify this expression to

$$E_{ion} = (61.5 \text{ mV}) \log \frac{(\text{conc. ion})_{outside}}{(\text{conc. ion})_{inside}} \quad (\text{in mV})$$

This expression computes the potential outside the cell membrane relative to the potential inside the cell membrane for each individual ion. Applying the equation to the specific case of K^+ , we have $(\text{conc. } K^+)_{outside} = 3 \text{ mM}$ and $(\text{conc. } K^+)_{inside} = 155 \text{ mM}$, so

$$E_{K^+} = (61.5 \text{ mV}) \log \left(\frac{(\text{conc. } K^+)_{outside}}{(\text{conc. } K^+)_{inside}} \right) = (61.5 \text{ mV}) \log \left(\frac{3}{155} \right) \text{ mV} = 61.5 (-1.65) \text{ mV} = -102 \text{ mV}$$

The cell membrane has a potential that is 102 mV (0.102 V) more negative on the inside than the outside due to the much higher K^+ concentration inside the cell (Figure 19.15).





Figure 19.13 A mammalian neuron cell.

Substituting numerical values for the constants, R and F , assuming $n = 1$ and a body temperature of 37°C , and converting to millivolts, we can simplify this expression to

$$E_{\text{ion}} = (61.5 \text{ mV}) \log \left(\frac{(\text{conc. ion})_{\text{outside}}}{(\text{conc. ion})_{\text{inside}}} \right) \quad (\text{in mV})$$

This expression computes the potential outside the cell membrane relative to the potential inside the cell membrane for each individual ion. Applying the equation to the specific case of K^+ , we have $(\text{conc. } \text{K}^+)_{\text{outside}} = 3 \text{ mM}$ and $(\text{conc. } \text{K}^+)_{\text{inside}} = 135 \text{ mM}$, so

$$\begin{aligned} E_{\text{K}^+} &= (61.5 \text{ mV}) \log \left(\frac{(\text{conc. } \text{K}^+)_{\text{outside}}}{(\text{conc. } \text{K}^+)_{\text{inside}}} \right) \\ &= (61.5 \text{ mV}) \log \left(\frac{3}{135} \right) \text{ mV} = 61.5 (-1.65) \text{ mV} = -102 \text{ mV} \end{aligned}$$

The cell membrane has a potential that is 102 mV (0.102 V) more negative on the inside than the outside due to the much higher K^+ concentration inside the cell (Figure 19.15).

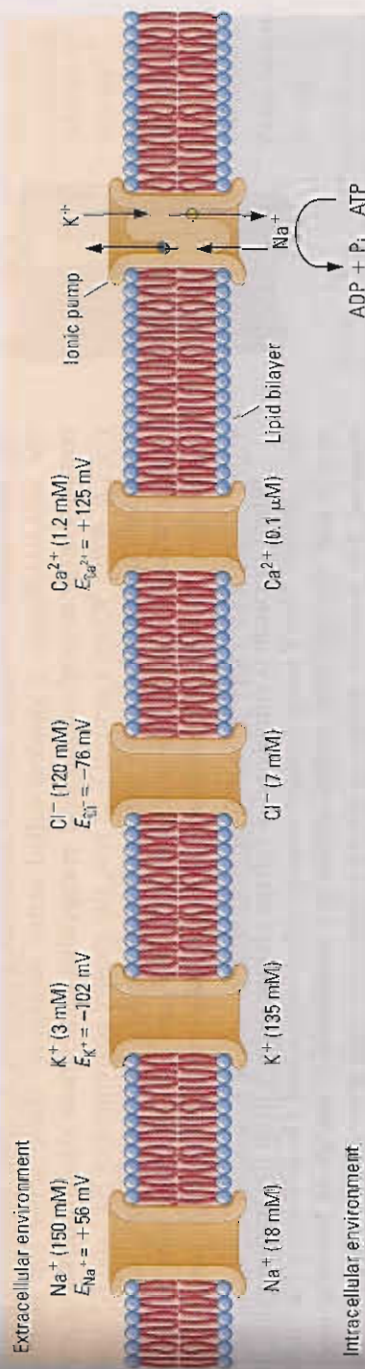
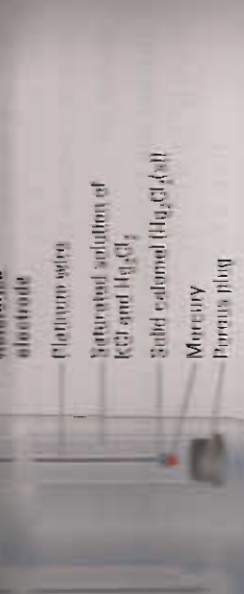


Figure 19.14 Ion concentrations inside and outside a mammalian neuron cell. Ion channels for Na^+ , K^+ , Cl^- , and Ca^{2+} are shown, as is the Na^+ - K^+ ion pump. Concentrations are given in millimoles per liter, except for intracellular Ca^{2+} , which is given in micromoles per liter.



... of the pH meter. The glass electrode is a Ag/AgCl electrode in contact with a glass membrane. It is sensitive to the external H^+ concentration. The internal solution is a saturated calomel electrode.

... specialized cells called neurons that communicate signals generated by changes in the intracellular concentrations (Figure 19.13). The communication is electrical signals generated by millisecond-long action potentials. These electrical signals are the result of the neuron separating different concentrations of ions across its cell membrane. The ions that move across the cell membrane are Na^+ , K^+ , Cl^- , and Ca^{2+} . The intracellular concentrations differ from the extracellular concentrations in

Ion	Extracellular Concentration (mM)	Potentials (mV)
Na^+	150	+56
K^+	3	-102
Cl^-	120	-76
Ca^{2+}	1.2	+125

... create potentials across the neuron cell membrane. The equilibrium potential for each ion is given by the Nernst equation:

$$E_{\text{ion}} = (61.5 \text{ mV}) \log \left(\frac{(\text{conc. ion})_{\text{outside}}}{(\text{conc. ion})_{\text{inside}}} \right)$$

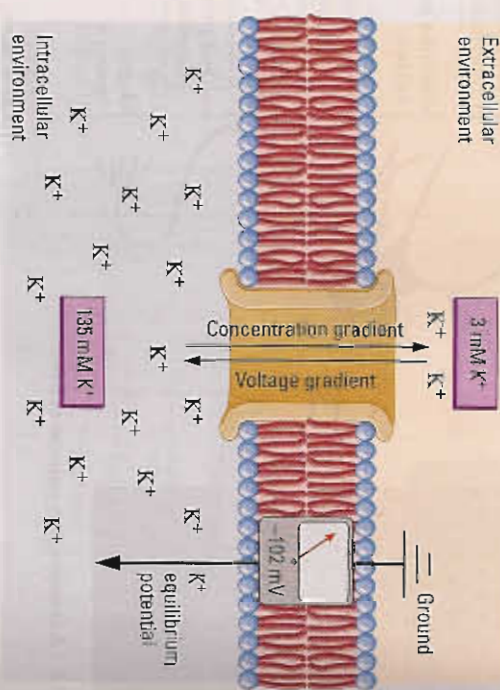


Figure 19.15 The equilibrium potential for K^+ across a neuron cell membrane. The K^+ concentration is higher inside the cell than outside it. The Nernst equation explains the -102 mV equilibrium potential for K^+ .

Just as for K^+ , each important ion shown in Figure 19.14 has a potential that depends on the concentrations of that ion inside and outside the cell membrane. The values for Na^+ , K^+ , Cl^- , and Ca^{2+} shown in the figure can be used with the Nernst equation to calculate the contribution that each ionic species makes to the final resting potential of the neuron. The *resting membrane potential* for a cell—that is, the potential when no nerve impulse is being transmitted—depends on each of the individual ion potentials. The equilibrium potentials for each of the ions involved are averaged in proportion to the relative permeability of the cell membrane for each ion. The resting membrane potential is different for different types of neuron cells and is in the range of -60 to -75 mV, with the inside of the cell being more negative than the outside.

How do the concentrations of ions inside and outside the cell membrane become different? Ions move across the cell membrane by several mechanisms, but all the ions undergo continual movement. In general, ions tend to move down concentration gradients, that is, from a region of higher to lower concentration. In addition, active *ion pumps* move Na^+ and K^+ *against* their concentration gradients—that is, from regions of lower to higher concentration. Thus, the ion pumps move Na^+ from inside to outside the cell membrane and move K^+ from outside to inside the cell membrane, a process called active transport. These active ion pumps require energy to perform this task, energy that comes from the hydrolysis of ATP ($\Delta G^\circ = -30.5$ kJ/mol). When a neuron is at rest, the passive movement of Na^+ and K^+ ions is exactly counterbalanced by the active movement of Na^+ and K^+ ions via the ion

flow of K^+ out of the cell, moving the process leading to the generation of the current of about 1 ms (1×10^{-3} s). Generation of a current on the basis for the transmission of signals is the basis for the transmission of signals in the neuron. During this process, the bulk concentration of ions either inside or outside the cell membrane is much less than the total concentration of ions in the cell. Thus, an *electrochemical* event related to the cell membrane is the movement of ions across the cell, not to bulk concentrations of ions.

EXERCISE

19.8 Neuron Equilibrium

What would the membrane potential E_m be if K^+ were the only ion to be considered?

19.9 Common Batteries

Voltaic cells include the conventional primary cell. Some batteries, such as the common Zn – MnO_2 battery, while others, such as air–zinc batteries, are classified as primary or secondary. Primary cells cannot be easily reversed by the application of an external potential. Secondary cells cannot easily be reversed, so when they are “dead” and must be discarded, they can be recharged or a rechargeable battery can be reversed, so this type of battery can be used repeatedly.

Primary Batteries

For many years the “dry cell” invented by Leclanché in 1836 was the most common source of energy for flashlight and other portable devices. The zinc–carbon dry cell, which acts as the anode. The zinc is in the form of porous paper that forms most of the inner surface of the dry cell. The cathode is a graphite rod coated with a mixture of ammonium chloride (NH_4Cl) and zinc oxide (MnO_2). As electrons flow from the zinc anode to the graphite cathode,



and the ammonium ions are reduced,



The ammonia reacts with zinc ions to form zinc ammonium chloride, which prevents a build-up of Zn^{2+} ions.